

# Seminary names Dockery president, Hawkins chancellor

April 19, 2023

FORT WORTH—Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary trustees announced they unanimously elected David S. Dockery as president and O.S. Hawkins as chancellor at their April 19 meeting.

In announcing Dockery's election as the seminary's 10th president, Trustee Chair Danny Roberts called him "God's man for Southwestern Seminary at this time."

## A 'critical juncture' in the seminary's history

"Our seminary's at a critical juncture in this 115-year history," Roberts said. "And in God's providence, he has already provided the man to lead our seminary during this time."



(Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary Photo)

Dockery served as [interim president](#) and Hawkins as senior adviser and

ambassador-at-large for the seminary since last September, following the resignation of Adam W. Greenway as president.

Initially, trustees had named Hawkins, former president of Guidestone Financial Services, as acting president immediately after they accepted Greenway's resignation.

Five days later, the board met in executive session by video conference and announced Dockery and Hawkins would work "in tandem" to address what Hawkins called the "external and internal challenges facing the seminary."

During Greenway's time as president, the seminary experienced significant turnover in faculty, staff and administration, and it was running a major deficit.



Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary accepted a nonbinding agreement to sell 15 acres of its B.H. Carroll Park to the City of Fort Worth for \$11 million. (Southwestern Seminary Image)

Last October, [Southwestern Seminary announced layoffs](#) to avert a potential financial "crisis," and Dockery presented trustees an organizational restructuring plan that cut operational and personnel costs by about \$3.6 million.

In February, the seminary accepted a nonbinding agreement to [sell 15](#)

[acres of its B.H. Carroll Park](#) to the City of Fort Worth for \$11 million. The city plans to use the property to provide housing for 140 homeless families and victims of domestic violence.

## No need to ‘look further’ for president

Roberts said trustees did not need to “look further for our next president” based on Dockery’s “impressive performance as interim [president], providing stability and healing, his long track record of outstanding Christian leadership in higher education, with the current needs of the institution.”



David S. Dockery

Although a presidential search committee would be typical, “Southwestern’s current challenges are best faced with clarity in the office of the president as soon as possible and for the future,” he said.

Roberts noted it. is not the first time a president of Southwestern was elected without a search process, referring to the seminary’s second president, L.R. Scarborough.

“We have settled today who our leader is, and we may move forward as we continue to seek God’s favor on Seminary Hill, as we equip men and women

of the next generation of ministers to the calling that God has given them,” he said.

## **‘Deeply humbled and genuinely grateful’**

Dockery said he was “deeply humbled and genuinely grateful for the privilege and responsibility to serve” as Southwestern’s president.

“I am truly thankful for the overwhelming support from the board of trustees as well as for the faithful encouragement and prayerful support from the faculty, staff, colleagues and students,” Dockery said. “What an honor it will be to continue to serve side-by-side with O.S. Hawkins, a dear friend and person that I greatly admire and from whom I have learned much in recent months.

“We recognize that we stand on the shoulders of so many who’ve gone before us. I love this institution and the best aspects of its history. We will, with God’s help, seek to carry forward in the future the best of Southwestern’s heritage and the Southwestern spirit.”

Dockery said he trusts in the “Lord’s favor and blessings to rest on Southwestern Seminary and Texas Baptist College in the days to come.”

## **New role of chancellor**

Roberts expressed gratitude for Hawkins’s willingness to accept the new role of chancellor in which he “will continue to offer his experience as statesman and influence in this seminary and in this community.”

“There are really few leaders in Southern Baptist Convention life who have the impeccable leadership credentials of Dr. Hawkins has with the sterling

track record of 25 years as president of GuideStone Financial Resources, among other places of service,” Roberts said.



O.S. Hawkins

Hawkins would continue to serve as a volunteer and will report to Dockery by providing “counsel, offer support and guidance, develop contacts, raise funds and bring his influence, credibility, and good will and gravitas to our seminary community,” Roberts said.

“This change in title will greatly aid his efforts in supporting the seminary,” Roberts said. “And we are blessed that this Southwesterner is willing to serve our seminary at this strategic moment in our history.”

As a two-time graduate of Southwestern, Hawkins said his service to the seminary is in gratitude for what the institution has meant to him.

“I have loved Southwestern since the first day I attended classes in January 1970, and I feel a sense of indebtedness to all those who invested so much in my own journey to the M.Div. and Ph.D. degrees on this hill,” Hawkins said.

“While I will be serving alongside Dr. Dockery in the new role of chancellor, I will be volunteering my time and whatever gifts and talents God has given

me to prayerfully advance the school into what we hope and prayerfully expect to be a brighter tomorrow. We are calling on all Southwesterners to join us on this journey.”

## **Experience as a scholar and administrator**

Dockery, who earned the Master of Divinity degree from Southwestern Seminary in 1981, joined the seminary faculty in 2019 when he was named distinguished professor of theology and theologian-in-residence for the B.H. Carroll Center for Baptist Heritage and Mission.

He served as special consultant to the president, and from December 2020 to February 2022, he also served as interim provost at Southwestern. He is the inaugural director of the Dockery Center for Global Evangelical Theology, named in his honor by the board of trustees at their spring 2022 meeting.

After a lengthy career in Christian higher educational leadership at Trinity International University, Union University and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Dockery was invited in 2019 to assist with the founding of the International Alliance for Christian Education.

He also served as president of the Evangelical Theological Society and board chair of the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities, Christian College Consortium, and Consortium for Global Education.

In addition to his degree from Southwestern Seminary, Dockery holds an undergraduate degree from the University of Alabama at Birmingham, a Master of Divinity degree from Grace Theological Seminary, a Master of Arts degree from Texas Christian University and a Ph.D. from the University of Texas at Arlington.

He was named a distinguished alumnus by Southwestern Seminary in 2002.

Dockery has written, edited or contributed to nearly 100 books, and he served as the New Testament editor for the 40-volume *New American Commentary Series*. He was general editor of the 15-volume *Reclaiming the Christian Intellectual Tradition Series* and is co-editor of the multi-volume *Theology for the People of God* series. He is general editor of the forthcoming *New English Translation Study Bible*.

Dockery and his wife Lanese have been married more than 47 years, and they have three married sons and eight grandchildren.

Hawkins retired in March 2022 as the president and CEO of GuideStone after a quarter-century leading the SBC entity. He previously was pastor of First Baptist Church in Dallas and First Baptist Church in Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

He has written more than 40 books and received the distinguished alumni award from Southwestern Seminary in 2000.

He and his wife Susie have been married since 1970. They have two married daughters and six grandchildren.

*Based on information provided by the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary communications office, with additional reporting by Managing Editor Ken Camp.*